

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, MPOL, NATO, NL
SUBJECT: PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON DUTCH DEFENSE BUDGET

1. ANNUAL TWO-DAY DEBATE IN LOWER HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT ON DEFENSE
BUDGET BEGAN JAN 20. DEBATE HAS BEEN RATHER DESULTORY AFFAIR
THUS FAR. DEFIN VREDELING IS TO REPLY TO QUESTIONS LATE EVENING
OF JAN 21.

2. DURING CONVERSATION WITH MFA NATO DIRECTOR VAN EKELEN, DCM
WAS TOLD THAT BUDGET DEBATE HAD BEEN A "GREY" AFFAIR WITH MANY
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PARLIAMENTARIANS ASKING ABOUT FUTURE PLANS FOR DEFENSE SPENDING.

VREDELING'S REPLY TO MOST OF THEM WILL PROBABLY BE EVASIVE ON GROUNDS THAT ECONOMIC FACTORS ARE UNKNOWN AT PRESENT.

3. RADICAL PARTY HAS INTRODUCED A MOTION WHICH CALLS ON GON TO GO BACK ON ITS PLEDGE NOT TO MAKE UNILATERAL REDUCTIONS IN ARMY BEFORE MBFR IS COMPLETED. VAN EKELAN EXPRESSED PUZZLEMENT AS TO RATIONALE FOR MOTION WHICH HE SAID HAD NO HOPE OF ADOPTION. QUESTION AS TO SOURCE OF 21-MILLION GULDERS WHICH NECESSARY TO KEEP NEPTUNES FLYING THIS YEAR COULD PROVE DIFFICULT FOR DEFMIN, ACCORDING TO VAN EKELEN. VREDELING SIDE-STEPPED QUESTION YESTERDAY BY SAYING THAT ANSWER COULD ONLY COME LATER IN YEAR, BUT PARLIAMENTARIANS NOT LIKELY LET ISSUE LIE SINCE IT OBVIOUS THAT SOMETHING ELSE MUST BE SACRIFICED TO TUNE OF 21-MILLION GULDERS.

GOULD

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